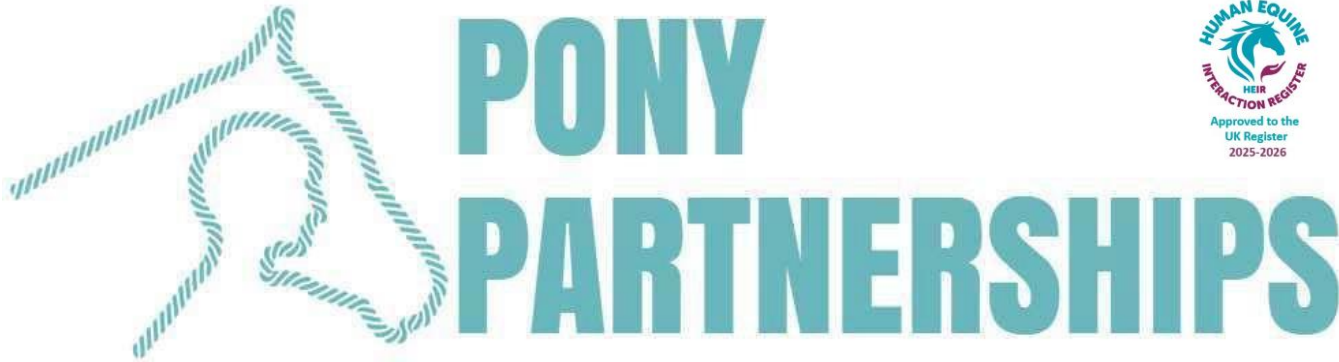




Risk Assessment - 2026-2027

Name of Organisation: Pony Partnerships CIC

Venue/Address: All venues

Date of Review: 1 September 2026

Date of Next Review: 31 August 2027

Author: Danielle Mills

Introduction

Pony Partnerships CIC is committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing and welfare of all participants, staff, associates, volunteers, visitors, and animals.

This risk assessment identifies foreseeable hazards associated with Pony Partnerships CIC activities, premises, and environments. It considers who may be harmed, how harm may occur, and the control measures in place to reduce risk as far as reasonably practicable.

This document should be read alongside individual participant risk assessments, animal risk assessments, COSHH assessments, fire risk assessments, activity plans, behaviour support plans, medical plans, and dynamic risk assessments.

Legal and Regulatory Context

This risk assessment has been developed with regard to relevant UK health and safety legislation, safeguarding guidance, animal welfare requirements and recognised good practice.

This includes the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Management of Health, and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, relevant RIDDOR, COSHH, safeguarding, fire safety, equality, and animal welfare requirements.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 is considered where relevant to commissioned education, alternative provision, or child-facing safeguarding arrangements.

Allergy safety guidance is considered where relevant to commissioned education or alternative provision, and as recognised good practice for managing allergy risks in child-facing services.

Pony Partnerships CIC will take reasonable and proportionate steps to identify hazards, assess risks, and implement suitable control measures. Animal welfare takes priority over session delivery, and activities will stop if welfare concerns arise.

This risk assessment will be reviewed to reflect changes in legislation, guidance, activities, premises, participant needs, incidents, or organisational practice. Risks are reviewed after incidents, near misses, participant changes, animal changes, weather/site changes, new activities, commissioner requirements, or updated guidance.

Purpose and Scope

This Risk Assessment identifies potential hazards associated with Pony Partnerships CIC activities and venues. It evaluates who might be harmed, how, and what control measures are in place to ensure risks are managed *as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP)*.

All assessments follow the *Health and Safety Executive's Five Steps to Risk Assessment (2025)*:

1. Identify hazards.
2. Decide who might be harmed and how.
3. Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions.
4. Record findings and implement them.
5. Review and update regularly.

This overarching risk assessment should be read alongside individual participant risk assessments, behaviour plans, individual animal risk assessments, COSHH assessments, and dynamic risk assessments for visits or changing activities.

Risk Assessment Matrix

Risk Rating	Definition	Action required
Low	Unlikely to occur, minimal harm, adequate controls in place.	Maintain current precautions.
Medium	Possible occurrence, could cause harm, additional precautions may be needed.	Review and implement further actions to reduce risk.

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High	Likely or severe impact, urgent action required to reduce risk.	Immediate action required before the activity proceeds.
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Section 1 – General Organisational Risk Assessment

Activity/Hazard	Who might be harmed and how	Initial risk (L/M/H)	Existing controls/precautions	Further action needed (to reduce risk)	Residual risk (L/M/H)	Action by who/when
Handling ponies and equines	Participants and staff/associates/volunteers – bites, kicks, trampling	Medium	Only calm, trained animals used; constant supervision; PPE (boots, gloves)	Ongoing refresher training for animal handling	Low	Danielle Mills – Termly
Working in outdoor areas (slips, trips, uneven ground)	All site users – falls, minor injuries	Medium	Surfaces maintained; clear walkways; signage; first aid kit on site	Review site condition weekly and after bad weather	Low	Site Lead – Weekly
Allergic reactions or anaphylaxis, including food, animal dander, hay, straw, dust, pollen, mould, latex, insect stings, animal feed, bedding or medication-related allergy risks	Participants, staff, volunteers, or visitors with known or suspected allergies may experience rash, breathing difficulty, asthma symptoms, swelling, allergic reaction or anaphylaxis	Medium/high	Medical and allergy information collected before participation where possible; Allergy Safety Policy and Allergy and Anaphylaxis SOP followed; relevant staff briefed; emergency medication arrangements agreed where required; first aid arrangements in place; food sharing restricted unless allergy information has been checked; activities adapted where known allergens are identified	Maintain allergy register; check emergency medication arrangements before sessions where required; review allergy plans following incidents, near misses or changes in need; include allergy risks in individual risk assessments where relevant	Low/medium	Allergy Safety Lead / Session Lead – ongoing
Working alone	Staff/associates/volunteers	Medium	Confirm lone working	Reinforce policies during	Low	Danielle Mills –

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(lone working)	– accident or incident without assistance		check-in arrangements and emergency contact procedures are in place before session; check-in/check-out system; mobile phones carried; Hollie Guard/check-in arrangements	induction; review lone working risk plan		Induction & Annual
Behavioural incidents (aggressive behaviour, flight risk)	Participants and staff/associates/volunteers – injury, distress	High	Staff/associates/volunteers trained in de-escalation; clear behaviour plans; 2:1 support when required	Review behaviour plans termly; ensure staff/associates/volunteers trained in physical intervention (if applicable). Restrictive intervention is a last resort only, must be lawful, necessary, and proportionate, and must be recorded through the Incident Reporting Procedure.	Medium	DSL – Ongoing
Medication administration errors	Participants – incorrect dose or timing	Medium	Written parental consent; only trained staff/associates/volunteers administer; double-check system	Annual refresher training for medication management	Low	First Aid Lead – Annually
Fire in stable or barn area	All persons on site – burns, smoke inhalation	High	Fire extinguishers serviced; no smoking; clear evacuation plan; fire drills at least once per academic term; Fire Risk Assessment in place; see Critical Incident and Business Continuity Policy and evacuation arrangements for full fire	Increase signage; review emergency lighting	Low	Fire Marshal – Annually

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			safety procedures; risk assessment before any fires. Review Fire Safety Management Policy and Fire Safety Management Plan.			
Infection control (zoonotic or communicable diseases)	All participants – illness from contact or poor hygiene	Medium	Handwashing stations; no eating near animals; disinfect equipment	Review cleaning schedules; update COSHH training annually	Low	H&S Lead – Annually
Manual handling (feed, hay, water containers)	Staff/associates/volunteers and volunteers – strain or back injury	Medium	Training on correct lifting; mechanical aids available	Refresher training yearly; supervision for new staff/associates/volunteers	Low	Site Lead – Annual
Vehicle movement on site	Participants, visitors – collision risk	High	Designated parking; separate pedestrian paths; supervision during arrival/departure	Add speed limit signs; review traffic flow	Low	Site Lead – Termly
Electrical equipment use	All staff/associates/volunteers – electric shock, burns	Medium	Portable electrical equipment is subject to user checks and inspection/testing at suitable risk-based intervals; damaged equipment is removed from use immediately	Increase awareness in staff/associates/volunteers' induction	Low	Site Lead – Annual
Emotional distress during therapy sessions	Participants – anxiety, distress, trauma responses, self-harm concerns, disclosures, or boundary-related concerns	Medium	Qualified facilitators; wellbeing check-ins; supervision available	Continue reflective supervision and peer support	Low	Clinical Lead – Ongoing
Trips/falls inside therapy or barn area	Participants, staff/associates/volunteers, visitors – injury from clutter or uneven floors	Medium	Regular housekeeping: clear routes maintained	Monthly environment safety checks	Low	Site Lead – Monthly

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Animal illness or injury	Participants or staff/associates/volunteers – distress or infection risk	Medium	Regular vet checks; isolation for sick animals	Keep animal health logs up to date	Low	Animal Welfare Lead – Monthly
Use of cleaning chemicals (COSHH)	Staff/associates/volunteers, Participants – skin irritation or inhalation	Medium	COSHH data sheets available; PPE provided; labelled containers	Update COSHH register; retrain annually	Low	H&S Lead – Annual
Data breach / confidentiality issue	Participants – privacy violation	Medium	Passwords, MFA, approved systems, secure storage, phishing awareness, lost/stolen devices, data breach procedure.	Annual data protection refresher	Low	CEO/Manager Officer – Annual
Serious violence, threats involving weapons, peer conflict, or exploitation risk	Children, young people, staff, volunteers, or visitors may be harmed, threatened, intimidated, exploited, or placed at risk during arrival, departure, off-site activity, or commissioned placement	Medium/high	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy followed; Behaviour, Engagement and Attendance Policy followed; staff maintain professional curiosity; concerns reported to DSL; individual risk assessments used where concerns are known; emergency services contacted where immediate risk exists; Search, Prohibited Items and Confiscation Procedure followed where relevant; voluntary handover sought where safe; staff do not conduct non-consensual personal searches; police	Add serious violence, weapon-risk and exploitation prompts to individual risk assessments where relevant; review arrival, departure, and off-site arrangements where concerns arise	Low/Medium	DSL / Session Lead – ongoing

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			contacted where an immediate serious risk, weapon or suspected offence cannot be managed safely.			
Online safeguarding risk during sessions or commissioned provision	Children and young people may be exposed to harmful content, online grooming, AI-generated abuse, image sharing, bullying, exploitation, or unsafe communication	Medium	Digital Safety and Device Use Policy followed; participant device use restricted unless agreed; staff supervise agreed digital activity; concerns reported to DSL	Review digital arrangements annually; include AI-generated content, nudes and semi-nudes, online grooming, and harmful content in staff awareness	Low	DSL / CEO – annual and ongoing

Section 2 – Site and Environment-Specific Hazards

Location	Potential Hazard	Control Measures
All areas	Reduced staffing due to illness	Small group sizes; staffing from commissioning organisation where possible; bank staff; low-risk activities when staffing is reduced
Public areas	Other people on site	Induction/tour first; restricted access to equipment areas; supervised access only; activity stopped if danger seen; visitors sign in/out
Public areas	Building maintenance / uneven surfaces	Signage; restricted access; unsafe areas locked; induction reminders; no running; public liability insurance in place
All areas	Risk of infection	Handwashing and hand gel; sanitising before food handling; regular animal health checks
Gate, parking, and roads	Injury from vehicles	Safe-area briefing; remove participants from moving vehicles area; staff/associates/volunteer supervision; hi-vis where needed
Gate and hedges	Escape / absconding	Safe boundary briefing; staff/associates/volunteer supervision; one staff member follows only where safe and remains in communication
Tool store	Injury from tools/equipment	No unsupervised access; defect checks; tool counting; equipment stored safely; minimum necessary equipment used; ongoing supervision
Stables / tack	Manual handling injuries	Staff supervise carrying of tack/equipment; safe-use instruction; stop if unsafe

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Location	Potential Hazard	Control Measures
room / field		
Stable doors/shed	Trapped fingers in wind	Doors shut or fixed open; staff, associate, or volunteer supervision; safe-use instruction
Stables	Animals tied in yard	Close supervision; trained staff oversee movement; animals tied only under supervision; companion animal used if separation anxiety creates risk
Stables	Trip hazards from mucking out equipment	Equipment kept out of reach; wheelbarrows emptied and stored safely; staff supervise use
Fields and surrounding areas	Uneven ground / trip hazards	Walk not run; appropriate footwear; tidy yard; equipment put away after use
Fields	Muddy / uneven surfaces	Dynamic assessment before access; weather and participant ability considered; some fields restricted if unsafe
Fields	Injury from animals	staff, associate, or volunteer supervision; unsafe animals removed; safety briefing before entering field
Fields	Electric fencing	Participants informed which fences are live; instructed not to touch; safety briefing before activity
Outside	Sunburn / sunstroke	Sun cream available; staff/associates/volunteers model use; drinks offered regularly; shade available
All areas	Unauthorised access, violent intruder, credible weapon/security threat or nearby incident requiring lockdown/shelter-in-place	Secure gates and access arrangements; staff supervision; staff familiar with SOP 5 and venue-specific lockdown/shelter arrangements; agreed alert and safe areas; 999 contacted where required; participants moved only where safe; no attempt to move or recover animals where this increases risk; incident reviewed under critical-incident and safeguarding arrangements.

Section 3 – Activity-Specific Risk Assessments

3.1 Animal Care

Nature of activity:	Routine care and management, cleaning enclosures, animal checks, food and water, observation, answering questions, poo picking.
Potential hazards:	Bites, knocks, trips, allergic reaction, infection.
Controls:	Qualified/trained staff/associates/volunteers; health and safety information provided; tame animals only; supervision at all times; participant suitability assessed; first aider on site; hand sanitising; PPE worn; supervised equipment use; dynamic risk assessment; activity stopped if unsafe. Allergy information must be checked where relevant. Activities involving animal hair, bedding, hay, straw,

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	feed, dust, or enclosed animal areas must be adapted where known allergy risks are identified.
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3.2 Groundwork in Field with Animals

Nature of activity:	Interaction with animals, simple tasks, observation, reflection/processing.
Potential hazards:	Bites, kicks, trips, allergic reaction, instinctive animal behaviour, manual handling injuries, slips/falls, cuts, fractures, emotional distress.
Controls:	Staff/associates/volunteers trained in equine facilitated activities and first aid; sensible, well-mannered animals; hand sanitising; minimum 1:3 supervision; induction and introduction to animals; participant suitability assessed; PPE; animal matched to confidence and ability; no simultaneous conflicting activities; weather/surface checks; equipment supervised; session stopped if unsafe. Known allergy risks, including animal dander, pollen, insect stings, hay, straw and dust, must be considered before the activity begins.

3.3 Walking Out with Animals

Nature of activity:	Taking an animal on a walk in the local area.
Potential hazards:	Falls on road, being trodden on, loose dogs, cyclists, public interaction, passing riders, slips/trips/falls, cuts, fractures, emotional distress.
Controls:	Risk assessment before every walk; participant suitability assessed; steel toe cap boots where needed; staff/associates/volunteers supervision throughout; each animal has its own individual risk assessment; route planned in advance; remaining staff/associates/volunteers informed of route and return time; mobile phone carried; first aid trained staff/associates/volunteers; hi-vis worn by staff/associates/volunteers and Participants; activity stopped immediately if danger seen; briefing on passing public, traffic and animals.

3.4 Preparing Food and Drinks

Nature of activity:	Preparing hot drinks, simple food preparation, and supervised use of kettle and food preparation equipment.
Potential hazards:	Burns/scalds, food poisoning, food allergies, slips/trips/falls, cuts, and emotional distress.
Controls:	Staff/associates/volunteers closely supervise Participants when undertaking food and drink preparation; participant capacity to follow instructions safely is assessed; Participants are not permitted to use cooking facilities without a member of staff/associates/volunteers present; drinking water only is used for drinks; basic food hygiene is adhered to; surfaces are kept clean; staff/associates/volunteers complete basic food hygiene training; first-aid arrangements confirmed before the activity; suitably trained first aider available where required by the activity risk assessment.; activity stopped if unsafe. Staff handling/preparing food must have appropriate food hygiene training; allergies and dietary needs must be checked; food safety procedures followed. Food must not be shared or offered unless allergy information has been checked. Ingredients and allergen risks must be considered before food preparation or cooking activities.

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3.5 Using Open Fire

Nature of activity:	Fire pit, storm kettle, open fire use, and supervised activities involving lighting, managing, and extinguishing fire.
Potential hazards:	Burns/scalds, smoke inhalation, burnt clothing, fire spread, contact with hot equipment, slips/trips/falls, and other physical injuries or emotional distress.
Controls:	Staff/associates/volunteers closely supervise Participants at all times; participant capacity to follow instructions safely is assessed; safety briefing given when fire is lit; all fire areas clearly defined and physically marked at a safe distance before fire is lit; dynamic risk assessment undertaken before lighting, including weather/wind conditions and location of participants/animals; long hair tied back and no loose clothing; Participants shown how to light fire safely; heat-proof gloves worn by staff/associates/volunteers and Participants where needed; when feeding a fire, Participants do not work above it and approach as instructed by the activity leader; adults monitor fire so it does not build too high; Participants instructed about safe materials to put on the fire; kettle or equipment placed in a safe place to cool; nothing touched until cold; adult ensures fire is extinguished at end of activity; water available for burns and extinguishing; first-aid arrangements confirmed before the activity; suitably trained first aider available where required by the activity risk assessment.; activity stopped if unsafe. Review Fire Safety Management Policy and Fire Safety Management Plan

3.6 Field Maintenance

Nature of activity:	Strimming, hedge trimming, burning waste, digging, auger use, post knocker, moving waste.
Potential hazards:	Flying particles, loud noise, puncture/slicing wounds, fumes, burns, smoke inhalation, explosion risk, manual handling injuries, slips/trips/falls, fractures.
Controls:	Close supervision; participant suitability assessed; correct tool-use procedures; no tool use without training; no maintenance work without staff/associates/volunteers present; PPE including goggles, ear defenders, masks and gloves where safe to use; full face masks for powered trimmers/trimmers; tools maintained in good repair; hair tied back; steel toe cap footwear for heavy tools; gloves for waste materials; fire safety briefing; safe fire boundary; water available; first aider present.

3.7 Stable Maintenance

Nature of activity:	Drilling, sawing, hammering, lifting heavy objects, sweeping.
Potential hazards:	Flying particles, loud noise, puncture/tearing wounds, blunt force injury, manual handling injuries, fall from height, slips/trips/falls, cuts, fractures.
Controls:	Close supervision; participant suitability assessed; correct tool-use procedures; no maintenance work without staff/associates/volunteers present; PPE; tools maintained; hair tied back; no loose clothing; manual handling training where needed; steel toe cap footwear; first aider present.

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3.8 Transporting Participants

Nature of activity:	Driving Participants in staff/associates/volunteer's car.
Potential hazards:	Car accident, injury, vehicle damage, breakdown.
Controls:	Business use insurance; MOT, tax, and roadworthy vehicle; full driving licence; DBS-checked driver; participant suitability assessed; seatbelts always worn; booster seats supplied/fitted by parents where needed; speed limits followed; pre-drive safety checks; breakdown plans in place; vehicles covered for recovery.

3.9 Offsite Trips and Visits

Nature of activity:	Offsite trips and visits.
Potential hazards:	Slips, trips, falls, cuts, fractures, emotional distress, members of the public, private property, safeguarding concerns, separation from group.
Controls:	Staff/associates/volunteers briefed to supervise closely; qualified and competent staff/associates/volunteers; participant suitability assessed; venue contacted or visited in advance where possible; phones and contact details available; induction/tour on arrival; safe-area briefing; additional clothing/footwear as needed; weather checks; 1:2 supervision ratio; head counts; first aider and first aid kit present; medical needs catered for; contingency plan for incidents; dynamic risk assessment by session leader; activity stopped if unsafe; incidents and near misses reported; risk assessment must consider known safeguarding concerns, serious violence or exploitation risks, peer conflict, medical or allergy needs, emergency medication, mobile phone access, public interaction and safe return arrangements. The risk assessment must consider known safeguarding concerns, serious violence or exploitation risks, peer conflict, medical or allergy needs, emergency medication, mobile phone access, public interaction, and safe return arrangements.

Review and Monitoring

- All risk assessments are reviewed annually, or sooner if activities, staff/associates/volunteering, participants, locations, or control measures change.
- Incidents, accidents and near misses are recorded and used to review this assessment where necessary.
- Accidents are recorded in line with the First Aid and Medical Needs Policy.
- Medium and High risks are reviewed termly until reduced to Low.
- Findings are shared in staff/associates/volunteers' meetings and supervision to ensure everyone is aware of current controls.
- The DSL and H&S Lead oversee compliance with this document.

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